Gas Arms Limited to 2 Lands, U.S. Says

8-12-69

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"The United States does not have lethal chemical weapons stored in any foreign nations other than West Germany and Okinawa," the State Department declared yesterday.

Both exceptions had already been acknowledged—Okinawa after a newspaper reported an accident July 8 in which 24 Americans were exposed briefly to nerve gas leaking from a cylinder there.

Since July 30, State Department spokesman Carl Bartch has been asked almost daily whether the United States could store chemical weapons in other countries without informing their governments. Yesterday's answer, in effect, was yes and no:

"Okinawa," Bartch said, "is under U.S. jurisdiction and no further authority or consultation was required in that case." As for Germany, Bartch said that "the German authorities were notified that we had chemical weapons there."

No Treaty Limitations

Bartch said the notification was made "prior to the current deployment," but his statement made clear that Washington had not asked Bonn's permission. The treaties regulating U.S. troops in Germany "contain no limitations concerning the type of weapons which the allied forces require and store," he said.

The Pentagon, in acknowledging the storage of nerve gas on Okinawa, announced on July 22 that "all toxic agents" would be removed. Bartch did not say when that removal will take place, and he said that as far as he knew the weapons will stay in Germany.

There have been published reports—especially since the Okinawa nerve gas incident was brought to light by the Wall Street Journal—that U.S. war gases have been stored in still other countries. Yesterday's statement did not deny those reports, since it covered only the current storage of these weapons in foreign countries.

Nor did the statement rule out caches of chemical weapons on American territory outside the United States.

Okinawa, whose future status is under negotiation between the United States and Japan, is a special case. The United Stages recognizes "residual Japanese sovereignty over the island and has agreed in principle to return it.